

*The Knowledge of Salvation precious
in the Hour of Death,*

Proved in a

S E R M O N,

Preached *January 4, 1759,*

Upon the Death of

The Rev. Mr. JAMES HERVEY,

*Rector of Weston Favell in
Northamptonshire.*

B. W. ROMAINÉ, M. A.

Lecturer of St. Dunstan's in the West, London.

Righteousness delivereth from Death.

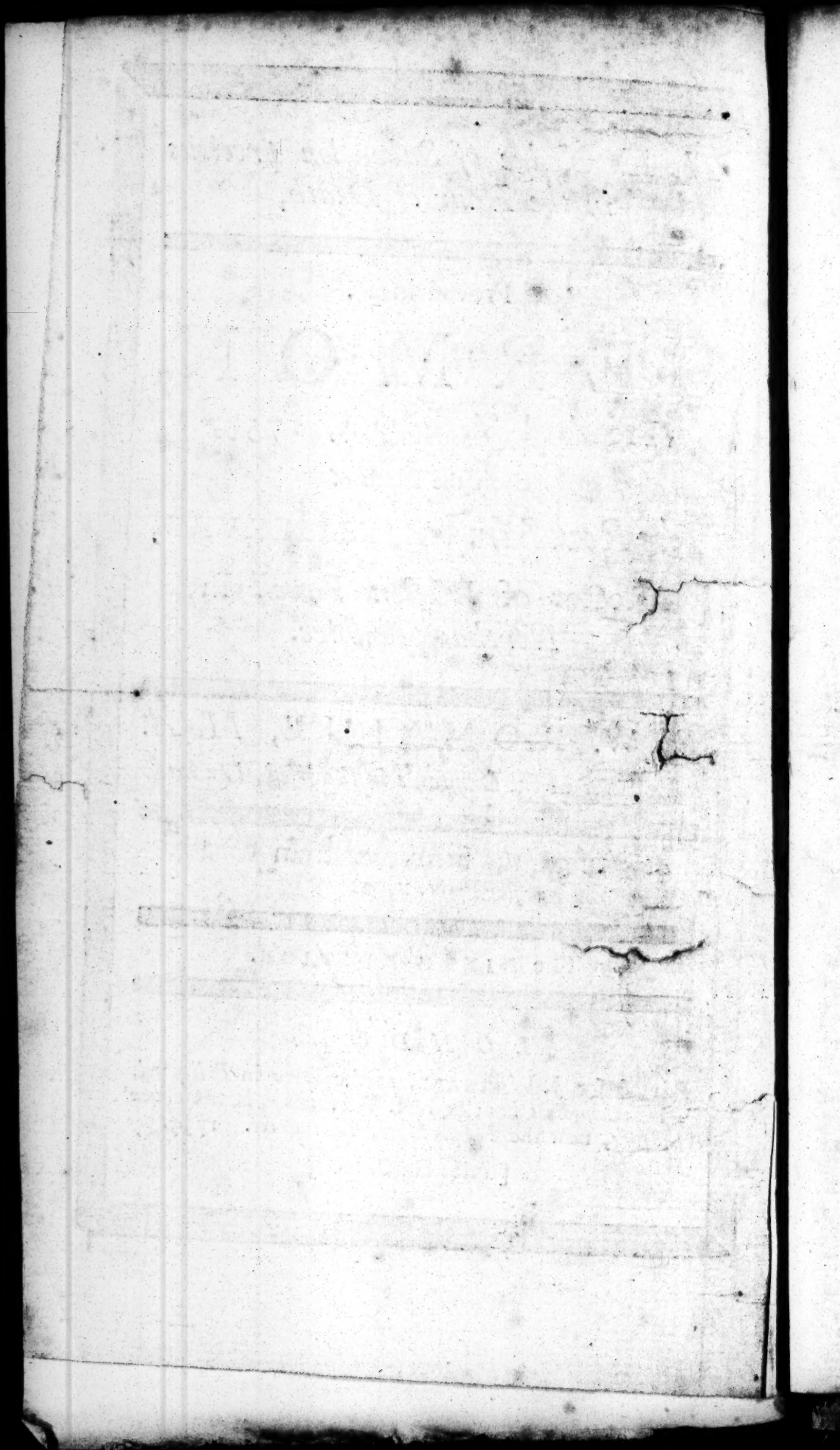
Prov. x. 2.

THE SIXTH EDITION.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. Worrall, at the Dove in Bell-yard,
near *Lincoln's-inn*; and M. Withers, at the Seven
Stars, near the Temple Gate, Fleet-street. 1759.

[Price Six-Pence.]



Luke ii. 29, 30.

*Lord, now lettest thou thy servant
depart in peace according to thy
Word:*

*For mine eyes have seen thy salva-
tion.*

According to the antient prophecies, in the fulness of time, God sent forth his son. He came to his own, when there was a general expectation of his birth. Many just and devout persons in *Jerusalem* were then looking out for the Redeemer's coming in the flesh, and among them good old *Simeon*, and *Anna* a prophetess are particularly mentioned. St. *Luke* says, *There was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and the same man was just, a justified person, and devout, fearing to offend God, as the greek word signifies, waiting for the consolation of Israel, he was waiting for the incarnation of the divine comforter, by whose birth all the promises of comfort were to be ratified and*

fulfilled, and the *Israel* of God was to receive everlasting consolation. The Lord was pleased to vouchsafe a particular revelation of his will in this matter to *Simeon*: *for the Holy Spirit was upon him, and it was revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ* incarnate. And he came by direction of the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the holy child *Jesus*, to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God that he had lived to this happy hour, when he could take up the prophet's words, and say, Lo this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation. *Simeon* waited to see God incarnate, and having seen him he wanted to live no longer. He desired his dismissal. All the ends of living were answered, and therefore he put up this sweet prayer — *Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.*

With these same words one of our dear brethren, now with the Lord, finished his course. They were the dying words of the Reverend Mr. *James Hervey*. He had long desired to depart, and to be with Christ,
which

which he knew was far better than to abide in the flesh, but he waited patiently for the Lord's time; and when it was come, he thus expressed the thankfulness of his heart, *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy most holy and comfortable word: for mine eyes have seen thy precious salvation.* The Lord heard him and gave him a gentle dismissal. He died as he had lived, in a perfectly even and calm composure of mind. Death shewed that he came to him as a friendly messenger to call him to glory, for he cheerfully obeyed the summons. There was no fear, no struggle, not a sigh or groan, but he departed in peace, and in full assurance of faith. Oh that you and I, my brethren, may so live by the faith of the Son of God, that when we come to die, we may be able to use this same prayer, and may receive of the Lord a like gracious answer.

These sweet dying words of our dear brother have made a great impression upon several of his acquaintance: for they have been led to consider them more closely, than perhaps they ever did before, and several have meditated upon them with great comfort. In order that others might do the same, and that his happy death might be the means of stirring up many to seek to die the death of the righteous, and that their
latter

latter end might be like his, I have determined to speak upon the words this day: May the same spirit by which *Simeon* spake them be in all your hearts. May he teach you their true and full meaning, and in God's due time may he give you the comfortable experience of them. Under his guidance let us consider

First, That when *Simeon* had seen the salvation of God, he was prepared to depart.

Secondly, He therefore desired it, and prayed for it; and,

Thirdly, He expected he should depart in peace according to God's word, which was fulfilled to him; and under each of these particulars, I shall speak of the experience of our deceased brother.

First, *Simeon* had it revealed to him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not die until he had seen the Lord's Christ, and when *Jesus* was brought into the temple, he was directed to go and receive him for the promised Messiah, and taking him up in his arms, he blessed God, and said, *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.* It's evident he spoke these words in their primary sense of his seeing *Jesus* with

with the eyes of his body, but this could have been no great cause of joy to him, unless he had before seen Christ some other way; for multitudes saw him with their bodily eyes, while he was upon earth, who were no better for the sight; and multitudes will hereafter see him in his glorified body, but it will be to their everlasting confusion. There is another kind of sight, to which our church referred you this afternoon, when each of you took up these words and said, for *mine* eyes have seen thy salvation. If you knew what you said, and spoke the truth as you had experienced it, you meant that you had seen the salvation of God with the eye of faith; according to what is said of *Moses*, *That by faith he saw him who is invisible*, (Heb. xi. 27.) He saw him by the eyes of his soul, who was invisible to the eyes of his body: for the soul has its eyes as well as the body, but sin darkened them; it put them into the state, in which the eyes of the body are, when they have no light; then they can see nothing. So the soul is said in scripture to be in darkness and blindness, until the eyes of the understanding be enlightened. They cannot see any spiritual objects until the sun of righteousness shine upon them; nor when he does shine, can they see any loveliness in those objects, until they be able to act faith upon them; for the eye of faith not only beholds the object, but also distinguishes

distinguishes its own interest in it. Faith keeps all the senses of the soul in act and exercise upon the proper object, which each apprehends; here the eye of faith is fixed upon salvation, not only viewing it as a blessing belonging to others, but also appropriating it to itself. *Mine eyes have seen thy salvation*, here *Simeon* speaking of our Saviour calls him *Salvation*, because all salvation is in and from him. He is the author and he is the finisher of it. The great plan of it was laid by the co-equal and co-eternal persons of the ever blessed Trinity before the foundation of the world, it was carried into execution by our divine Saviour in the fulness of time, and his is an eternal salvation, an eternal deliverance from all evil, and an eternal possession of all good. Upon the entrance of sin into the world this great salvation of our God was revealed, and by faith believers under the Old Testament-dispensation enjoyed the benefits of it. At the appointed time *Jehovah* took a body of flesh, and our divine *Immanuel* stood up to save his people from their sins. He undertook to satisfy all the demands of law and justice. The law he satisfied by paying it a perfect unfinning obedience, which being a divine as well as a human obedience, did therefore magnify the law, and make it more honourable, than if all the creatures in heaven and earth had never offended against it. Justice he satisfied
by

by enduring the threatened punishment, and after his sufferings and death, justice had no more demands upon him : for he came out of the prison of the grave with a full discharge. This satisfaction, made to law and justice by the obedience and sufferings of the Lord *Jesus*, is what the scripture calls the *Righteousness of God*, because it is a divine and infinitely perfect righteousness, a divine righteousness wrought out by *Jehovah* himself, and as infinitely perfect a righteousness as *Jehovah* could make it. In this all glorious righteousness of the God-man Christ *Jesus* consists the sinners salvation: for he is accepted and justified by it, the fruits of this righteousness are his sanctification, and the robe of this righteousness is his glorification. So that salvation in time and in eternity depends upon the righteousness of the incarnate God. This is the fundamental doctrine of the christian religion, for which our dear brother was a noble champion. He saw, he experienced the importance of it, and therefore in his conversation and in his preaching it was his favourite topic. How sweetly, how profitably have I heard him dwell upon it, and how excellently has he defended it in his writings? Read his *Theron and Aspasio*, and when you are thoroughly convinced that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one who believeth, and can say with faith, “ in the Lord have I righteousness and
B “ salvation,”

“salvation,” then your mind will be settled in peace and comfort, and you will be delivered from those dangerous errors, which are now propagated concerning the righteousness of the Lord Jesus. Thank God for the masterly defence of it in these dialogues *. In them Mr. *Hervey*, being dead, yet speaketh the praises of his adoreable Redeemer, and clearly proves that we have our salvation through his righteousness. *Immanuel* the Saviour is the justifier, as he says himself, *Isaiah* xlv. 21, 22. “There is no God else
“beside

* About a week before Mr. *Hervey* was taken ill, I mentioned to him a report that was spread about, concerning Mr. *Sandiman's Letters upon Theron and Aspasio*, to this effect: That he (Mr. *Hervey*) had written a letter to Mrs. *Cooke*, and therein had said, That Mr. *Sandiman* was in the right, and had convinced him of his error; or words to that purpose. To which he answered, That he had written a letter to Mrs. *Cooke*, and therein he had acknowledged, that many of Mr. *Sandiman's* remarks were judicious, and that he had corrected some of his expressions and inaccuracies. But he said, That he was very far from having changed his opinion as to the substance and matter of the argument: for therein he thought Mr. *Sandiman* was entirely wrong. Whereupon I desired he would insert an advertisement in some of the *London* papers, signed by himself, to set this mistake right, lest it might hinder the sale and reading of his books, and thereby prevent much good. To which he agreed; and added, that he would let that paragraph stand in his *Answer to Mr. Wesley*, relating to Mr. *Sandiman*, only softening the expression a little: but all this was prevented by his illness and death. The truth of this I am ready to attest.

ABRAHAM MADDOCK,
Curate of Weston Favell.

“ beside me, a God that gives righteousness,
 “ and a Saviour, there is none beside me.
 “ Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends
 “ of the earth, for I am God, and there is none
 “ else.” How could they be saved by looking
 unto Christ? Certainly, not by a look of
 their bodily eyes. *Simeon's* joy did not arise
 from having Christ in his arms, and looking
 upon him; but from being able to look up-
 on him by an act of faith. He knew him
 to be *his* Saviour. Thence arose his joy,
 and from thence must yours arise. It is the
 look of faith which saves, the eye of faith
 kept in exercise upon its proper object, even
 upon Jesus, the author and finisher of the
 faith. It is this act of faith, which our Lord
 requires — *Look unto me*, with this promise
 annexed, *and be ye saved*. There is salva-
 tion in the look of faith: for it sees and re-
 ceives Jesus, as he is offered in scripture, for
 a free, full, and complete Saviour. And
 whoever keeps the eye of faith in constant
 exercise, is prepared with good old *Simeon* to
 depart in peace: because by having an in-
 terest and property in the salvation of our
 God, he is thereby delivered from every thing
 that can make death dreadful, and is in pos-
 session of every thing that can make death
 desirable.

What is it that makes death dreadful? Is
 it not guilt in the conscience, accusing the
 sinner for the breach of the holy law, and

alarming him with fear of the threatened punishment, which the justice and holiness and truth of God are concerned to see inflicted, in time and in eternity? Thus we read, "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law." Death has power to sting, so long as the broken law gives sin a right to accuse and condemn: all unpardoned sinners therefore are afraid of death. From this state of fear and bondage our Lord came to save his people: "he came to deliver them, who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage;" and he does deliver them, when their sins are forgiven, and his righteousness is imputed to them: for then the broken law cannot condemn, nor justice punish, there being no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Upon which death loses its sting; and when the pardoned sinner looks upon it, he sees nothing terrible in its appearance, but can boldly and without presumption say, "Yea, when I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil: for thou my God art with me."

And he is not only prepared to die because he is delivered from every thing that could make death dreadful, but also because he is in the possession of every thing that can make death desirable. He knows he has an interest in Christ, and Christ is the possessor of heaven and earth. He has all things in his

his hands, and has promised to make them all work together for the good of his redeemed people : so that whoever has Christ has all things. " All things, says the apostle, " are yours, whether life or death, or things " present or things to come, all are yours." And the reason follows, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's. As all that Christ has is yours, and all that God has is Christ's, consequently all is yours. And death by name is yours : no longer a curse and a punishment, but turned into a real blessing : for it is the gate and entrance, through which you pass into endless life and never-fading glory.

Thus he is prepared to depart, who has seen with the eye of faith the salvation of God. The doctrine is clear from scripture ; but how is it, my brethren, in your experience ? Are you prepared to depart ? And on what do you build your preparation ? On the Lord Jesus, or on what ? Search and see, for nothing can comfort you in the hour of death, but having received him into your hearts by faith and love. You must see his salvation, and be able to keep the eye of faith intent upon it, before you can be prepared to depart ; but when this is your happy case, then in whatever shape death comes, you will be able to say with our dear brother, *Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word : for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.*

tion. He might well say, Mine eyes have seen thy salvation: for all that came near him were convinced that he had seen it. The effects shewed it. He had put off the old man, and had put on the new, and was under the influence of divine love to his adoreable Saviour. The love of Jesus ruled in his heart, and was therefore constantly uppermost in his mouth. He loved to be telling of his salvation all the day long. And he did not talk like a professor full of mere head knowledge; but what he spake had a warmth and life and power in it, which shewed that it came from his heart. He was perfectly inflamed with the love of his divine Lord and Master; and if you sat any time in his company, you could not help catching some of the holy flame. So that if strangers to his person may doubt of his experience of a Saviour's love, we who have conversed with him cannot. We are sure from what we saw and heard, that he had seen the salvation of God, and therefore was prepared to depart. He knew in whom he had believed, and was certain the power and the love of the dear *Immanuel* were in his interest; so that neither death, nor he that had the power of death, could hurt him.

A friend of mine was much with him on the 15th of *December*, and the discourse turned upon what Christ had done for his soul. Mr. *Hervy* spake strongly and earnestly

nestly of the assurance of his faith, and of the great love of God in Christ to him. He declared that the fear of death was taken from him ; and it afterwards appeared, that death had no sting to hurt, nor the grave any power to get victory over him : for when death came, it found his mind in perfect peace. He had no uneasy apprehensions of dying, but had hopes full of glory and immortality. Doubtless then he had seen the salvation of God. The knowledge of salvation had been precious to him in life, and therefore he experienced the preciousness of it in death : for then he could give thanks to God for giving him the victory through Jesus Christ his Lord. Happy are they to whom God has given the knowledge of their salvation ; they believe on good grounds, that their Saviour has brought them into a state of salvation, and therefore they are prepared to meet death, yea they can desire and pray for it, as *Simeon* did, which is the second particular I was to consider.

Simeon knowing that he was prepared, therefore desired to depart. And this is the believer's case. He longs for death, not out of an impatient discontented temper, but out of a real holy affection. When worldly men are oppressed with troubles on all sides, and see no way to escape, they are apt to desire death, that it may bring their misery to

to an end, and put them out of their pain. And there are some most miserable and abject cowards who murder themselves to get rid of the troubles of life. These men court death as a less evil, but the believer desires it as a real blessing. He knows that his death will be to the glory of his Saviour, for it grieves him to the heart, that he should ever do any thing displeasing to such a kind benefactor. After receiving so many tokens of Christ's love, Oh it is indeed afflicting to give him the least offence. I appeal to yourselves. You that have the love of Jesus in your hearts, are not you sorry that you love him so little? Have not you reason daily to mourn for your ingratitude to him? And what will such thoughts suggest, but a desire to be, where the very occasion of offence will be removed? It was on this account that *Mr. Hervey* desired death: for the last morning of his life, when his brother came in to enquire after his welfare, he said, I have been thinking of my great ingratitude to my God. And these thoughts made him wish to be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

And he desired it as *Simeon* did, and all believers do, upon another motive, namely, because the Lord will get himself honour, by the honour which he will give to

to his people in his kingdom. *He will be glorified*, says the apostle, *in his saints*; he will get himself glory by the great glory which he will bestow upon them. And as the believer has in all things an eye to God's glory, so has he especially in his desires to be dissolved and to be with Christ. He knows that God is glorified in him, and by him at present, but then it is imperfectly, and that grieves him. Self, or the creature will be trying to share the heart with God, and thereby to rob him of his glory. A bare thought of this, when only rising in the mind, hurts the believer. He would have every thought brought into subjection to Christ, and that makes him desire to be, where temptation and sin shall be no more, and where he shall glorify God, and God shall be glorified in him for ever and ever. With this view Mr. *Hervey* desired to depart. His great love to his Saviour's glory made him wish for death. He longed to be dissolved, that he might be freed from the frailties and infirmities of this mortal life, under which he laboured, and could not always, nor in a perfect degree, promote the glory of his redeeming God: therefore he desired to be with them who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, and are ever receiving glory from him, and ever giving glory to him. And the Lord granted his desire. He literally answered his prayer, for he departed in peace, according to the word

of God, as I purposed to shew under my *third* head.

What it is to be at peace with God, and to depart with a sense of this peace upon our minds, I cannot better express than in the excellent words of the present Archbishop of *Canterbury*, in his *Nine Sermons*, p. 132. “ *The peace of God* is that sense of being in friendship with him, that feeling of comfort and joy flowing from him, *which passeth all understanding*, exceeds the conceptions of those who have not experienced it, and will exceed hereafter the present conceptions of those who have.” And the believer, even when he is departing this life, has a sense of his being in friendship with God, and has a feeling of comfort and joy flowing from him. This is promised in scripture, and this is fulfilled to them who being justified by faith have peace with God. Being reconciled to the Father through the Son of his love, they live, and they die in peace.

I suppose some weak in the faith are thinking thus within themselves: “ Well, is it so, that true believers die in peace and joy? I am sure I could not at present: for I am dreadfully afraid of death; and what would not I give to be delivered from these fears? for they make my life miserable.”
My

My brethren, why are you in bondage to them? God offers you deliverance. There are many general promises in his word, that let what will happen to believers, the peace of God shall rule in their hearts. Thus *Isaiah* xxxvi. 3. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is staid upon thee;" and as it is a perfect, so it is a continual peace. "The Lord of peace himself, says the apostle, 2 *Thess.* iii. 16. give you peace always by all means:" for after he has once given this peace, he makes all means, even the most unlikely, tend to the promoting of it: therefore death can by no means weaken, and much less destroy this peace of God. These general promises he fulfilled to the patriarchs — for St. *Paul* says, *Heb.* xi. 13. "That they all died in faith," — they acted faith in their death, and consequently had a sweet sense of the peace of God in their hearts, when they died. *David* shews us the reason of their dying in faith, *Psalms* xlviii. 14. "This God is our God for ever and ever, he shall be our guide even unto death," They knew that their God would be with them to guide and keep them, when the body returned to dust, and the spirit returned to God who gave it: and therefore *David* spoke for himself, what each of them also could say — "When I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, because thou my God art

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“ then with me : thy rod and thy staff comfort me even then.” *Psalms* xxiii. 3. With this faith they looked upon death as disarmed of its sting and power to hurt, and therefore they laid down their heads, and fell asleep in the arms of death with as much composure, as any weary traveller ever longed for rest. They *fell asleep*. The scripture speaks of their death under this beautiful image to teach us, that death was as sweet to them as ever sleep was to a hard-labouring man. The faithful fell asleep quietly and composedly. And how should it be otherwise? They had no evil to fear : for they were at peace with God. And what could death do to hurt that peace? It does indeed dissolve all other bonds, but it strengthens this. It is the happy instrument of fastening the bond of peace with a tie, which never never can be dissolved. And when the faithful look upon death in this light, what is there in it but joy and peace, even a joy unspeakable, and a peace that surpasseth all understanding?

Perhaps some of you think, this is not always the case, because there are very good men, who have had strong conflicts and struggles before death. Nay, my brethren, think not so wickedly of God. Is it according to his word, that the faithful shall depart in peace, and do they not? What! can the word of God be broken? No. It shall stand

stand fast for ever and ever ; and in the case which you state, it does not follow that this peace is weakened or destroyed, because it is tempted. By no means. The sense of this peace may remain, when it is most furiously attacked : for it is the peace of God. God gave it, and God keeps it, and he may suffer the devil to tempt, but not to destroy it. The more it is tempted, the more honour redounds to God for preserving it in the fiery trial. It was more to God's glory to preserve his children in the fiery furnace, than to have kept them out of it. Doubtless he that has the power of death will make his last efforts, and try to shake the faith of the dying believer. The devil will then set upon him with all his fury. But though he be a roaring lion, yet he is chained, and the Almighty Saviour so over-rules his malice and rage, that he makes them work together for his glory and his peoples good ; as he did remarkably in the last efforts which the enemy made against our dear brother, He saw him in great weakness of body, and then made a furious onset against his faith, but the dear *Immanuel* was with him, and would not give him over into the enemies hands. His faith was tried, and it came like gold out of the fire. He knew that it would be tried, and had therefore prepared himself for the fiery trial. Speaking of it to a faithful minister of Christ, who was often
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with him in his last sickness, he said, —
 “ How many precious texts are there, big
 “ with the rich truths of Christ, which we do
 “ not comprehend, which we know nothing
 “ of; and of those which we do know, how
 “ few do we remember? *Bonus textuarius*
 “ *est bonus theologus*, and that is the armour.
 “ The word of God is the sword, these
 “ texts are the weapons which I must use
 “ when that subtile spirit, that arch-adversary
 “ of mankind, comes to tempt and sift me
 “ in my last conflict. Surely I had need be
 “ well provided with these weapons, I had
 “ need have my quiver full of them, to
 “ answer satan with texts out of the word
 “ of God, when he assaults me.” Satan
 did assault him, but found him prepared and
 armed. Mr. *Hervey* said to his friends the
 day that he died, “ Oh you know not how
 “ great a conflict I have.” And after he
 had sat for some time with his eyes con-
 stantly lift up towards heaven, and his hands
 clasped together in a praying form, he said
 — “ Now this great conflict is over.” Jesus
 made him conqueror over all the powers of
 darkness; having endeavour’d to rob him of
 his peace, but in vain, they left him in the
 Saviour’s arms, never more to be tempted;
 and he watched over him with the tenderest
 love, until he took him home. And when
 he went, he indeed departed in peace. His
 body seem’d to be ready as well as his soul.

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When death came he had not one struggle with it. There was not a single groan or sigh, or any thing that could shew the least unwillingness to depart. He had such a gentle dismissal as he had prayed for in *Simeon's* words. He departed in peace, and fell asleep.

I have now finished what I had to offer upon the three particulars mentioned in my text, and it appears, that when a sinner is convinced of his want of a Saviour, and is convinced that Jesus is such a Saviour as he wants, able and willing to save to the uttermost, and when he is made to see his interest in the perfect complete righteousness of this adoreable Saviour, and is assured of it from the word and Spirit of God, and from the fruits of righteousness produced in his life and conversation, then he is prepared to die; then he may desire it with submission to God's will, and whenever death comes he may expect to depart in peace, according to the word of God. These great truths I have illustrated from scripture and from experience, more especially from the experience of our dear brother, now with the Lord, of whom I have spoken nothing more, than what the words of my text naturally led me to say. If I were to attempt to draw the character of this excellent man, I would consider him in the several relations in which he stood to
God.

God and man, and would exhort you to follow him, so far as he followed Christ. But the compass of this discourse will not suffer me to enlarge. I can only just observe some particular instances, from whence it will evidently appear, that he had seen the salvation of God. He had a clear view of it by the eye of faith, and was able to act faith upon it, for his was a faith working by love. "We love God," says the beloved apostle, "because he first loved us;" "because we know by faith that he first loved us: so that our love is the reflex act of his love to us. And Mr. *Hervey* had great experience of God's love to him, and therefore his heart was full of love to God; and out of the abundance of his heart his mouth spake. There was such a sweetness of heart-love upon his tongue, that he used to speak of the love of the adoreable Redeemer, like one who had seen him face to face in the fulness of his glory. He would, with all the power of language and dignity of sentiment, speak for a long time together in praise of the ever-blessed Saviour; but you might plainly see, though every body else was pleased, yet he was not satisfied with what he had said. He thought he had not said enough, and what he had said fell far below his Lord's merit. But still he would try again, and indeed was never weary. You could not hear him speak for any time upon this his favourite subject, without

without being convinced, that he felt what he said; and if you had any love of God, when you went into his company, his conversation would inflame it. He had an excellency, which I never saw to so great a degree in any other person. He never let an opportunity slip of speaking of the love of Christ. He would take occasion from the most common incident, and yet it would not appear forced: for he had a wonderful talent at spiritualizing and improving whatever happened about him. By which means he hindered the conversation from turning upon trifling matters, and at the same time kept it up with spirit and usefulness. Having set the Lord always before him, he saw the love of God in every thing, and therefore it is not to be wondered that all objects and events should give him occasion to speak of it. In his last sickness it continued still to be his favourite theme: for whenever my friend, who was much with him, came into the room, he would begin to talk of the love of Christ, and of the great things which Christ had done for him, until his breath failed him; and as soon as he had recovered himself a little, he would proceed upon the same sweet subject: so that he might have truly applied to himself the words of the prophet — “ My mouth shall
 “ be telling of thy righteousness and of thy
 “ salvation all the day long: for I know no
 “ end thereof.”

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This heart-love to God appeared evidently in every part of his character. As a minister, his faith wrought by love to the souls of men in all the offices of his function. While his health permitted him, he watched like a faithful shepherd over his flock. He used to visit them from house to house, and to speak freely to them of the state of their souls; and when the weakness of his body obliged him to drop these religious visits, he would often grieve, that he could not be more useful, and would speak with great concern and uneasiness of his not being able to preach oftener, and to do more for Christ. In the pulpit he was fervent and earnest with his people, and would often exert himself beyond his strength: for he preached the great doctrines of salvation as one who had experienced the power of them. It was manifest to all who heard him, that he felt what he spake. And when we speak what we know, and testify what we have seen, then God blesses this experimental preaching. He puts a divine power and energy into it, and renders it effectual to awaken sinners, to comfort them that mourn for sin, and to edify and build up the faithful. Mr. *Hervey* had many happy proofs of the usefulness of his preaching for each of these purposes; and therefore he did not think it enough to preach once a week on the Lord's-day, but, he set up a weekly lecture at *Weston Favell*, which was very well attended, and was blest
to

to many of his neighbours, who will be his glory and crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming.

He did not forget that he was a minister in his own house: for he called his family together twice a day to serve God. It was his custom in the evening, after the servants had read the *Psalms* and the second lesson, to explain some part of what had been read. In this exercise he would sometimes dwell for half an hour; and when he met with a sweet passage upon the love of Christ, I have heard him speak for three quarters of an hour, and then he concluded with prayer.

In the morning when the family were met together, he used to ask the servants—"Well! where was our text last night?" And after they had repeated it, he made them give an account of what had been said upon it, and then he would repeat and inforce his last night's discourse, concluding with prayer.

In the afternoon when he was called down to tea, he used to bring his *Hebrew* Bible, or *Greek* Testament with him, and would either speak upon one verse or upon several verses, as occasion offered. This was generally an improving season. The glory of God is very seldom promoted at the tea-table; but it was at Mr. *Hervey's*. Drinking tea with him was

like being at an ordinance : for it was sanctified by the the word of God and prayer.

As a member of society, his faith wrought abundantly by love to his neighbour : for he was full of good works. His charities to the poor were very large ; and that he might be liberal to them, he was very frugal in his own expences. He chose rather to cloath the poor, than to give them money. He used to get some judicious person to buy linen, coarse cloth, stockings, shoes, &c. for them at the best hand, alledging that the poor could not buy so good a commodity at the little shops, and with driblets of money. “ I am God’s “ steward, says he, for his poor, and I must “ husband the little pittance I have to bestow “ upon them, and make it go as far as possible.” But where money would be particularly serviceable to a family long afflicted with sickness, or to a prudent housekeeper who had met with great losses in trade, he would give five, ten, or fifteen guineas at a time, taking care it should not be known from whence the money came.

He gave away a great number of good books, with suitable instructions for their use, and especially Bibles. In the blank leaf he frequently wrote something striking, or else stuck in a printed paper, relating to the promises of God in and through Jesus Christ.

Mr.

Mr. *Hervey's* income was but small, and it may be wondered how he managed it so well as to have such sums to spare for charitable uses. He could not have done it entirely out of his church-preferment, and he had no fortune of his own; but what money was left after the family expences were paid, and all the profits arising from the sale of his books, which was a very considerable sum, he gave away in charity. He made of it a bank for the poor. " And this, says he, I have devoted to God. I will on no account apply it to any worldly uses. I write not for profit or for fame, but to serve the cause of God, and as he has blest my attempt, I think myself bound to relieve the distresses of my fellow creatures with the profit that comes from this quarter." And he is still relieving them. He was not willing that his charities should die with him: for he ordered all the profit arising from the future sale of his books to be constantly applied to charitable uses. Thus having believed in God he was careful to maintain good works, knowing that these things are good and profitable unto men.

In his private life he was under the influence of the same faith, working by love to the will and commandments of God. His holy walking was very exemplary. What he said, in words concerning his interest in
the

the Redeemer's righteousness, he proved by his actions: for he was very sensible of the importance of this scripture, "He that saith
" he abideth in him, ought himself also so to
" walk, even as he walked." (1 *John* ii. 6.)

Mr. *Hervey* walked very close after Christ, and found that the belief of Christ's righteousness being imputed to him for his justification, was so far from being a licentious doctrine, that it inspired him with the noblest motives to a grateful obedience. His holy life was an excellent recommendation of his principles: for I never saw one who came up so near to the scripture character of a christian. God had enriched him with great gifts, and with great graces, and had made him humble: for he was humbled by the power of grace. He had been a very vain proud young man, but the grace of God emptied him of pride and self, and cloathed him with humility. Having put on Christ he had put on with him the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit; which appeared in his great patience and resignation to the will of God. He had some very sharp trials of his faith and patience, both from God and from men, and he learned obedience by the things which he suffered. It was very remarkable, that in his long illness he was never known to fret or be uneasy, nor did the persons about him ever hear

hear one angry, or one hasty word come out of his mouth.

. The same principle of faith working by love, was manifest in his studies, which he directed to the glory of God. He was once a great reader of the Greek and Roman authors, and his writings shew that he had a good taste for classical learning; but for some years past he chiefly applied himself to the sacred scriptures. God had blest him with a fine understanding, and a great memory, which he exercised in reading the Bible in the original languages. He was very well skilled in the Hebrew, and was an excellent critic in the Greek, and was a scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, who, like unto a man that is an householder, bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old. He had a great veneration for this treasure of the Old and New Testaments. He used to talk of them in the highest terms, next to that adoreable Person of whom they treat. They were sweeter to him than honey and the honeycomb, and so they will be to every one who reads them, as he did, with faith. Whoever can act faith upon the exceeding great and precious promises contained in the sacred volume, will find so much sweetness in it, that he will have but little relish left for other books.

As

As to his writings, I leave them to speak for themselves. * They stand in no need of my praises. They are in the hands of the public, and every reader will form his own judgment. Oh that the spirit of the living God may direct it, that whoever reads his writings may learn to have no confidence in the flesh, but to make mention of Jehovah's righteousness, even of his only.

The time would fail me, if I was to enlarge upon all the particulars of his life and death. That was not my design. I only intended briefly to relate some things, from whence a tolerable judgment might be formed of Mr. *Hervey's* character. But I cannot finish without taking notice of the last scene of his life, which was very triumphant and glorious. The last and great trial of his faith was more precious than that of gold which perisheth. Its preciousness never appeared more, than in the hour of death: for then

* Mr. *Hervey's* printed Works, are
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then he evidently saw by faith, and apprehended the salvation of God, and could rejoice in a clear view of his own interest in it. When Dr. *Stonhouse* saw him for the last time, namely, on *Christmas-Day*, about two hours before he expired, Mr. *Hervey* pressed home upon him his everlasting concerns, in the most affectionate manner, telling him that here is no abiding place, and begging of him to attend, amidst the multiplicity of his business, to the one thing needful.

The Doctor, seeing the great difficulty and pain with which he spoke (for he was almost suffocated with phlegm and frequent vomitings) and finding by his pulse that the pangs of death were then coming on, desired that he would spare himself. “No, says he, Doctor, no. You tell me I have but few moments to live, Oh let me spend them in adoring our great Redeemer. Though my flesh and my heart fail me, yet God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.” He then expatiated in the most striking manner upon these words of St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* iii. 22, 23. “All things are yours, life and death: for ye are Christ’s. Here, says he, is the treasure of a christian. Death is reckoned amongst this inventory — and a noble treasure it is. How thankful am I for
E “ death,

“ death, as it is the passage through which
 “ I pass to the Lord and giver of eternal
 “ life, and as it frees me from all this mi-
 “ sery you now see me endure, and which
 “ I am willing to endure, as long as God
 “ thinks fit: for I know he will by and by,
 “ in his own good time, dismiss me from
 “ the body. These light afflictions are but
 “ for a moment, and then comes an eternal
 “ weight of glory. Oh welcome, welcome
 “ death — Thou mayest well be reckoned
 “ among the treasures of the christian — To
 “ live is Christ, but to die is *gain*.”

After which, as the Doctor was taking his final leave of him, Mr. *Hervey* expressed great gratitude for his visits, though it had been long out of the power of medicine to cure him — He then paused a little, and with great serenity and sweetness in his countenance, though the pangs of death were then on him, repeated these triumphant words —

“ Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart
 “ in peace, according to thy *most holy* and
 “ *comfortable* word: for mine eyes have seen
 “ thy *precious* salvation. Here, Doctor, is my
 “ cordial. What are all cordials to the dying,
 “ compared to the salvation of Christ? This,
 “ this supports me.” — He found this sup-
 porting him in his last moments, and de-
 clared it by saying twice or thrice, *Precious*
salvation,

salvation, and then leaning his head against the side of the easy chair, in which he sat, he shut his eyes, and fell asleep. Oh precious *salvation* ! How precious must it be to the dying man, who, interested in it, can thank God for death, and reckon it among his riches ; who, supported by faith in the *salvation* of God, can account it his gain to die ; and can gladly say, Oh welcome, welcome death ! May this faith support you, my brethren, when all other supports fail, and make *salvation* as precious to you as it was to Mr. *Hervey* ! And of this you may be assured, that what the Lord did for him he is able also to do for you. He was indeed a glorious instance of the power of grace : for by the grace of God he was what he was. And grace is free. As free for you as it was for him. Able also to make you live and die as much to the glory of God as he did. He was truly a burning and a shining light ; but the Lord's hand is not shortened. It can make your light shine also before men, and enable you to adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour, as much as Mr. *Hervey* did. And the great use to be made of his example is, to stir you up to glorify God for the gifts and graces bestowed upon him, and to desire the same may be bestowed upon you. With this view I shall apply it

First, To those persons who have never seen the salvation of God, and consequently are not prepared to depart in peace: and these are all careless sinners, who live secure in the wilful commission of sin. Mr. *Hervey* knew, that whenever the Lord should call him out of this life he should be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith; and cloathed in this righteousness, he was certain that he should appear at the bar of justice without spot of sin unto eternal salvation. But this is not your experience. Nay, you have never been awakened to desire it. You have never been humbled under a sense of your lost condition, nor broken down under a conviction of your helplessness: so that you have never seen your want of a Saviour, and consequently have never seen the salvation of our God. If you entertain any hopes of departing in peace, while you are in this state, you are of all men the most deceived: for when death comes, it will find you in your sins, unpardoned, without any faith in the Redeemer's righteousness to make death desirable, but with every thing that can make it terrible. The holy just and good law of the most high God will accuse, conscience will plead guilty, justice will condemn and punish, and the wrath of God will

will abide upon you for ever and ever. How is it possible you should depart in peace, unless you die insensible? and that would be dreadful indeed. If sin should so far infatuate you, that you never awake out of its delusive slumbers, until you are called to receive the wages of sin, Oh think what sort of a peace you speak to yourselves? since it leaves you in the greatest danger, and at the same time insensible of it. To depart in such a false peace would be your everlasting destruction. Oh Sirs, consider then what a delusion you are under? The wrath of an offended God abideth on you, the curses of his broken law hang over your guilty heads, and you are liable to the vengeance of his almighty justice, and yet you think yourselves safe. You are saying, Peace, peace, while all the powers in heaven and earth are at war with you, and in a moment you may be cut off and delivered over to the tormentors: and then you will have a sad, and eternal experience of that awful threatening, "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

Men and brethren, what do you say to these things? Are they true, or are they not? If they be true, why are you not influenced by them? And if you think them not true, why do you make any profession of the christian religion? Why do you come to the

the house of God to attend upon his ordinances? Your appearance here ranks you among professors, and if you keep up the form without the power of godliness, I have for you in the *second place* a word of reproof.

There have arisen in the latter days mockers, who pretend to ridicule the seeing of the salvation of God, and the being thereby prepared to depart in peace. Possibly there may be some such amongst us to day, who laugh at all vital and experimental religion. If there be, I would ask them, whether the scripture has not promised deliverance from the fear of death? Is it not written (*Heb. ii. 15.*) "that
 " Christ came to deliver them who through
 " fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage." Observe, they were in bondage to the fear of death, but Christ came to deliver them. And did not he attain the end for which he came? Most certainly he did. "I have finished, says he to his father, the work which thou gavest me to do." Now it was part of the work to deliver his people from the fear of death; and as the work was finished, consequently they are delivered. And they say they are. They attest it, and they have given the most convincing proofs of their having conquered all fear of death: they have been afflicted, tormented, stoned, sawn asunder, put on the rack, and yet they would not accept deliverance,

ance, because they were sure of obtaining a better resurrection. And of these there have not been two or three only, but a noble and numerous army, yea a great multitude whom no man could number; and glory be to God it is an increasing multitude. There are some who daily depart in peace, and there are hundreds, thousands now alive, who are waiting for their departure with hopes full of immortality; and why should you think they will be disappointed of their hope? Will Christ break his word? Can his promise fail? No. His word and his promise shall be established, when heaven and earth shall be no more; and until the place of them shall not be found, the Lord will always have such witnesses of the truth of the doctrine in my text, as Mr. *Hervey*, who will depart this life in the triumph of faith.

Against these plain facts, what can you object? They are founded upon the clear promises of scripture, which are literally fulfilled at this very day; and you can have no pretence to reject their authority, unless you run into downright scepticism, and deny the authority of the holy scriptures. If any of you have arrived at this pitch of ridicule, I shall not reason with you at present. Let the day decide the point. If death does not, judgment will. You will be forced to be tried by that book which you reject, and
by

by that judge whom you have insulted and vilified. Oh that you may be convinced of your error before it be too late. May God open your eyes to see your guilt and your danger, that you may sue for his mercy along with them, who are seeking the experience of the doctrine in my text, to whom I have in the *third place* a word of comfort.

I suppose there are many persons here, who find the sting of death in their guilty consciences, and who therefore desire to be delivered from the fear and from the power of death. My brethren, there is a glorious deliverer, who has in his own person conquered death and him that had the power of death, and he is able to make you conquerors. His power is almighty : for he is the Lord God omnipotent. And he is an all-loving Saviour, who is more ready to give, than you are to ask, his promised help. Since he has shewn you your want of it, ask and you shall have, seek and you shall find.

You do seek, you say, but it is with many doubts and fears. Of what do you doubt? Of Christ's power, or of Christ's love? He can deliver you. All things are possible to him, because all power in heaven and earth is in his hands. And he is a God of love ; he has shewed mercy to the greatest of sinners, and has shed his love abroad in
their

their hearts. He has given them faith to see their interest in him, and then they were happy living or dying: for whether they lived, they lived unto the Lord; or whether they died, they died unto the Lord: so that living and dying they were the Lord's.

True, say you, I believe this was the happy case of Mr. *Hervey*, and of many others, but I am full of doubts and fears, because I am such an unworthy creature, that I do not deserve any mercy. Nor did they. God did not treat them upon the footing of desert; what he gave them was mere bounty, flowing from the riches of his unmerited love. That is the way in which he bestows his great salvation. All the blessings of it are free, as free for one sinner as for another. None are excluded, because they are great sinners: *Paul* found mercy. And none are rejected, because of their unworthiness: *Mary Magdalen* was pardoned; and why may not you? For all the gifts of God flow from his free grace, and are bestowed upon unworthy sinners; and if you are one of them, you are a proper object to receive the blessings of free grace, and the sense of your unworthiness should make you more earnest in asking, but it is no bar to your receiving, all the blessings of salvation: for Jesus Christ assures us in his word, "that *he* came to seek and to save that which was lost," such lost sinners as you are.

F

Thus

Thus you see what encouragement you have to believe in God. You have his word and his promise to rely upon: you have the testimony of God's people, declaring that they were once, as you are, afraid of death, but now Christ has taken away the fear of it. They have seen the salvation of God, and know by faith, that all the blessings of it are freely given them in Christ Jesus: therefore they are ready, they desire to depart. May the tender mercies of our God bring every one of you into this happy state; and to those who are already in it, I make my *fourth remark*.

My christian friends and brethren, you have seen the salvation of God, and are delivered from the fear of death; what return will you make unto the Lord for all the benefits, which he hath done unto you? Certainly you will not forget the great things, which he has already given you, and the greater things, for which you are waiting; and let these considerations constrain you to love this divine benefactor, and to serve him without fear in an holy obedience all the days of your life. Give evidence of the sincerity of your love, as your Lord requires, "If ye love me, keep my commandments"—Keep near to me in my ways, and walk close with me in mine ordinances, and you will not only thereby give proof of your love,
but

but it will also grow exceedingly ; and as it grows, your desire to depart will grow with it : for when the love of Christ rules in the heart, you will be ready, yea you will desire to depart and to be with him. This was the happy experience of our deceased brother ; and let his example stir you up to great care and watchfulness in your holy walking heavenwards, that your faith may be always working by love, as his did. Consider the graces of his life, and seek the same. Stop not short, but try to get beyond him. Consider his death. Remember with what perfect assurance he spake of his interest in Christ, and what strong proofs he gave of it, and then pray that your faith may stand as unshaken as his was in that great time of trial. And above all, forget not what supported him in his last moments ; it was the clear view he had of his interest in the great salvation of God : “ This, this, “ says he, supports me ”— now at the approach of death. Oh how precious did salvation then appear to him, when he found death coming disarmed and without a sting ; and it grew still more precious, when with his last breath he declared, that death had no power to hurt the peace of God, which ruled in his heart ; for even then he found salvation precious. You need not fear, my brethren, but this will be your happy experience. God has given you the knowledge

of salvation by the remission of your sins; and as your faith grows exceedingly, salvation will grow exceedingly precious. The greater experience you hereby get of the love of Christ, the more will you be supported under the trials of life, and the better prepared for the trials of death. You will find that the sweet sense of Christ's love in the heart will enable you to rejoice in suffering, and then you need not fear but it will enable you to rejoice in the sufferings of death; for who, or what shall separate believers from the love of Christ? Shall the troubles of life, or the pains of death? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril or sword? No. In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. *More than conquerors!* Oh glorious warfare, in which believers not only conquer their enemies, but also reap innumerable and endless blessings to themselves. Even death is to them a real blessing; they expect it, they find it so, and they are more than conquerors over it through him that loved them.

In the last place I must put you all in remembrance, that neither the words of my text, nor what has been said upon them, will be of any benefit without a blessing from God. We cannot see his salvation with the eye of faith, nor experience the power of it, with-

without the help of his grace. It is from him who has done all for us, that all must be done in us; and if some good impressions have been made this day upon any of your hearts, they will soon wear away, unless he preserve and strengthen them. If you desire at present to live Mr. *Hervey's* life, and to die his death, this desire will be ineffectual, unless it be carried into act by the mighty working of God's Spirit. He is all in all: for which reason we always begin and always end the hearing of the word with prayer, being assured that if *Paul* should plant, and *Apollos* should water, yet it would be to no purpose, unless God should give the increase. Oh that it may be abundant this day to his glory, and to the good of your souls. To that end let us pray —

O almighty and most merciful God, we humbly beseech thee to look down with mercy upon this congregation, and to bless the words which we have heard this day with our outward ears. Make them the means of opening the blind eyes, which have never seen their want of thy salvation. Lord enlighten them, and help them to seek, until they find pardon and peace in thee. Be gracious to those who are now waiting upon thee, believing that after they have seen thy salvation they shall be able to depart in peace. O Lord God, manifest it unto them, and add
this

this day to the number of those, who have seen and experienced it. We desire to glorify thee for every living christian, who knows in whom he has believed, and is ready and prepared to depart in peace: We give all the praise to the riches of thy free grace. And we also bless thy holy name for all thy servants departed this life in thy faith and love, beseeching thee to give us grace so to follow their good examples, as they followed Christ, that with them we may be partakers of thy heavenly kingdom. Grant this, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only mediator and advocate, to whom with thee, and the Holy Spirit, three co-equal persons in one Jehovah, be honour and glory, and blessing and praise, for ever and ever.

Amen.

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